

News Release

Poinsettias are in Bloom at U of M Crookston Greenhouses; Horticulture students prepare for the holidays early in the semester

By Itollefts on Wednesday, December 12, 2012 Hundreds of rooted poinsettia cuttings arrive in August at the University of Minnesota, Crookston in anticipation of another holiday season. Under the skill and coaxing of students involved in the commercial floriculture class, those cuttings develop into a beautiful poinsettia crop. This year's poinsettias create a beautiful and colorful display with their showy "flowers" known as bracts and include varieties such as Winter Rose Early Red, Freedom Early Red, Polar Bear, Enduring Pink, Monet, Presitge Red, and Prestige Maroon (deep red bracts). With the sale of each Polar Bear cutting, Paul Ecke Ranch, the propagator, makes a donation to help save the polar bears. Winter Rose Early Red is unusual with its crinkly, curly leaves and bracts.

Members of the fall semester class include: Dan Brutlag, a junior majoring in horticulture from Wendell, Minn.; Ashlynn Hartung, a junior majoring in horticulture from Lindstrom, Minn.; Catlin Kersting, a junior majoring in horticulture from Cloquet, Minn.; Ethan Kojetin, a junior majoring in horticulture from Atwater, Minn.; Lexi Salonek, a sophomore majoring in horticulture from Montrose, Minn.; Mitchell Sledge, a junior majoring in horticulture from St. Louis Park, Minn.; and Tim Staudehar, a junior majoring in horticulture from Hibbing, Minn.

In October, students started the process of forcing the plants to induce bract color in time for the holiday season in October. Following a specific procedure to control the light, the students covered the plants with a dark cloth at 4 p.m. and uncovered them at 8 a.m. each day to regulate the length of daylight the plants receive. The students are responsible for greenhouse chores on the weekends as well. Although the class is taught by Sue Jacobson, the crop is in the hands of the students. The work and production of the poinsettia crop is entirely the responsibility of the class. Jacobson says, "It's better to learn expensive lessons in school than at your job. We don't fire the students."

The Agriculture and Natural Resources Department offers commercial floriculture as part of the horticulture program to teach students to produce quality plants for a specific date - a skill necessary for employment in a greenhouse or garden center. "Poinsettias form their colored bracts, when the light is regulated," explains Jacobson. "The poinsettia really doesn't have a blossom like most flowers. Instead, the colorful red, pink, or white petals are modified leaves known as bracts. The blossoms are actually the small yellowish clusters in the center."

Jacobson often allows problems to develop to see how the students will solve them--something they would have to do in an employment situation and giving them an opportunity to apply what they have learned. The class demands hard work, dedication, and a strong team effort to grow the best poinsettias. Leadership and responsibility are two of the qualities that develop in this type of teaching and learning environment.

"Students learn so much from applying their classroom learning to real-world experience," Jacobson explains. "By taking responsibility for the crop, the students are accountable for the outcome making the commercial floriculture class one of the most memorable for the students." The class is excellent training for a career in horticulture, a multi-billion dollar industry in the U.S.

To learn more about the horticulture program with emphases in environmental landscaping, production horticulture or urban forestry, visit www.UMCrookston.edu/academics.

Today the University of Minnesota, Crookston delivers 26 bachelor's degree programs, 18 minors, and 39 concentrations on campus--as well as 10 degrees online--in the areas of agriculture and natural resources; business; liberal arts and education; and math, science and technology. With an enrollment of 1,800 undergraduates from 25 countries and 40 states, the Crookston campus offers a supportive, close-knit atmosphere that leads to a prestigious University of Minnesota degree. "Small Campus. Big Degree." To learn more, visit www.umcrookston.edu.

*In the photo, back row, l to r: Ethan Kojetin, Tim Staudehar, and Mitchell Sledge
Front row: Ashlynn Hartung, Lexi Salonek, Catlin Kersting and Sue Jacobson, instructor.*



News Categories

[Department - Agriculture and Natural Resources](#)

[🐦 Tweet](#)

News Home

News Archives



Small Campus. Big Degree..

- Employment
- Events Calendar
- Academic Calendar
- Library
- Directories
- Maps, Directions & Parking
- Quick Facts
- Bookstore

- Faculty & Staff🔒
- Email & Calendar🔒
- Contact Webmaster
- System Website
- Home

2900 University Ave., Crookston, MN 56716
800-862-6466 | 218-281-6510 | umcinfo@umn.edu

© 2021 Regents of the University of Minnesota. All rights reserved.
The University of Minnesota is an equal opportunity educator and employer.
[Privacy Statement](#)